

OCTOBER 2025 ISSUE

PUBLISH'D AFRIKA

LITERARY MAGAZINE

**RSA DANCER'S STAR
KEEPS RISING**

VERVE RESUDENCY
for Teresa Phuti Mojela

**ASIAN LITERARY
FESTIVAL SET
FOR AFRICA**

**FROM DIAMONDS
TO DRAMA:**

Our Stories Are Currency

**FRED KHUMALO
UNVEILED AS
COMMONWEALTH
JUDGE**

**PUBLISH'D AFRIKA
SHORT STORY
COMPETITION**

And the winners are...

**CALLS FOR
SUBMISSIONS**

**AWARD-WINNING PIKININI
SCIENTIST SERIES LAUNCH A
SUCCESS**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Award-winning Pikinini Scientist Series Launch A Success
2. Fred Khumalo Unveiled As Commonwealth Judge
3. RSA Dancer's Star Keeps Rising:
4. PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Short Story Competition:
5. Asian Literary Festival Set For Africa
6. From Diamonds To Drama: Our Stories Are Currency
7. Another Feather In The Cap For Thuso Mbedu
8. Funda Mpondo Festival Triumphs, Fostering Heritage and New Voices
9. The Nightwatchman: Representing Black Men in Colonial South Africa
10. "An author carries a book and a pen so that when you get inspired, you write it down."
11. Publishing, Manufacturing and Distribution Cluster Launched
12. Calls For Submissions

**PUBLISHED BY
PUBLISH'D AFRIKA**

Designed & Compiled by
Sukoluhle Nontokoza
Mdlongwa
Edited by Thokozaani
Magagula

CONTACT DETAILS**Call/WhatsApp:**

+27 83 487 4440

+27 74 643 0618

Email:

info@publishdafrika.com
thokozaanimagagula@publishdafrika.com
publishdafrika.com

Facebook: Publish'd
Afrika Magazine



Award-winning Pikinini Scientist Series Launch A Success



When her extroverted daughter returned from school sad that one of her classmates had refused her a hug, Dr Sarona Lengana thought deeply about how to explain to her about how other people could feel overwhelmed by such gestures of affection.

This, inadvertently, was how the award-winning 11 titles of *The Pikinini Scientist Sprinkles Some Love Dust* were born – Dr Sarona simply started to write a children's book as a way to better understand her daughter and also to explain things to her in a language she understands for her age.

The series, illustrated by CINO Media, and edited and published by PUBLISH'D AFRIKA,

was officially launched at Exclusive Books Melrose Arch on Saturday, 26 September 2025. Facilitated by PUBLISH'D AFRIKA's Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa, the launch was attended by both kids and parents, who were awe-struck by the presentations and science experiments led by the real-life Pikinini, Lerato Lengana.

Children had fun and they loved seeing a character they could relate to. It is not every day that a Black child can enter a bookstore and find a character that looks like them – from the hair, skin colour and her surroundings. With the real-life Pikinini guiding them, the children also

enjoyed trying out some experiments in real-time. They asked questions, learned and enjoyed the experience.

The book follows how Lerato, a.k.a Pikinini, shares her love dust with those around her. She believes her love dust is the answer to all problems and shares it

with everyone willing to receive it. She also understands that she has to keep her cup overflowing with love dust so as not to pour from an empty cup. She always calls on Jesus to replenish her cup so she can keep sprinkling the love dust everywhere she goes.



Asked by one of the parents how the concept of the book came about, Dr Lengana said her daughter Lerato is extroverted by nature and loves sharing hugs and chats a lot. So when she came home feeling sad because one of her classmates had refused her hug, she had to try and explain to her how other people can feel overwhelmed by such.

“I had to teach her other ways of sharing her love without making others uncomfortable,” she said. “Which is what Pikinini does throughout the book. She finds ways of sharing and communicating with others.”

Another parent wanted to know if the author planned to expand to writing about other cultures and maybe, also boys. Dr Lengana said she is indeed looking into translating the books into all the South African languages including braille.

“To spread the message to markets outside our country, we will also translate the books into Portuguese, Swahili and French,” she said. “We will also have

online science challenges that we initiate but engage the Pikinini-adult team on science experiments they’re interested in.”

Although the books are written through experiences with coaching a little girl, the concept discussed in book series cut across gender and culture and not sexist. We always have a good balance of girls and boys at each event. For the moment, Dr Sarona is researching the difference in parenting boys versus girls so she can help support the adults as they coach their boys into greatness.

“Once I understand this dynamic, I would be able to position these self-help concepts so they are intentionally relevant for the boy-child,” she said.



The beginning Scientist book launch at Exclusive Books Melrose Arch was exceptional. The experiences we had planned for both parents and the Pikininis themselves were executed beautifully. Sukoluhle facilitated the transitions really well and directed all the focus areas such as book info session,

motivation behind the writing, the show-stopping experiments and the themes we write about.

We had the parent/guardian-Pikinini teams in mind from the start... they walked into a beautifully decorated bookstore, their small lab coats hung on the backdrop and the entire book series on display together with the experiment gadgets. The award-winning book was front-and-centre with the illustrious award in between.

“What worked exceptionally was sitting on the floor and engaging the Pikininis with appropriate language and prodding questions whenever I was responding,” said Dr Lengana. “I’m so happy I didn’t lose any of them but the parents/guardians were also invited into the conversation. I absolutely loved the science experiments, the parents assisting the Pikininis as we kept trying. They comforted and encouraged and guided our experience. They clapped just as loud for all the Pikininis as they got hands on.”

“The scene I loved the most was one mom helping another Pikinini to pat down the mound of salt so the wool would stick to the ice cube. What followed is forever etched in my heart... the satisfaction and delight on the Pikinini’s face when he realised he got the experiment right, was priceless.”

Dr Sarona said her support system for the Pikinini series is out of this world. Cino Media and her brother Xolani have continued to sponsor the visuals for each of the events she hosts, as well as her

company, LnM Dreambox, which was also the sponsor for the launch. New partnerships have been established with several other companies and NPOs, such as Hope’s Business Training Institute, Grace Unfolded, as well as her mom, daughter, old and new friends and colleagues who referred other friends so their Pikininis could experience the magic of wonder firsthand.



“I also learnt a lot from some of the failed experiments we had planned, such as using the exact same brands used during prep time, each Pikinini ought to have a chance to wear the lab coat, as well as coordinating this experience better for the Pikinini and well as the parent,” she said. “I learned that when things fail, the experience doesn’t end... don’t panic, extract immediate lessons and troubleshoot later.”

Fred Khumalo Unveiled As Commonwealth Judge



Renowned South African author, Fred Khumalo, has been unveiled as one of the judging panel members for the 2026 Commonwealth Short Story Prize, featuring an international line-up of distinguished writers and literary voices representing each Commonwealth region.

The panel is chaired by acclaimed British novelist Louise Doughty, with regional judges including South African writer Fred Khumalo for Africa, Bangladeshi editor and translator Rifat Munim for Asia, Inuk Canadian writer Dr Norma Dunning for Canada and Europe, Jamaican writer and lawyer Sharma Taylor for the Caribbean, and Australian author Maxine Beneba

Clarke for the Pacific region.

This distinguished panel will evaluate submissions from across the 56 Commonwealth nations, with each judge reading entries from all regions before collectively selecting a shortlist of around twenty-five stories. The judging process involves selecting five regional winners, each receiving £2,500, with one chosen as the overall winner who receives £5,000.

Fred Khumalo's appointment as the Africa region judge brings particular significance to the continental literary


community. The prolific author of 19 books, including novels, short story collections, journalism, and biographical works, brings decades of experience as both writer and cultural commentator to the selection process. His acclaimed work "*Dancing the Death Drill*" has been translated into German, Setswana, and isiZulu, with more translations into other local languages in the pipeline.

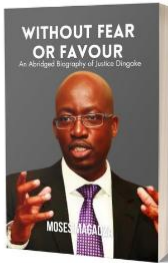

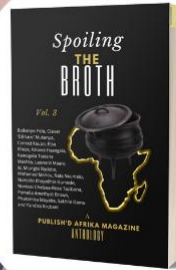
Khumalo's impressive credentials include winning the European Union

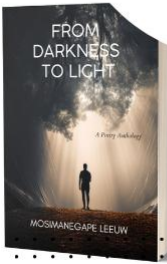

Literary Award and the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences Award. A journalist by training who writes primarily in English but has also published two books in Zulu, he holds an MA Creative Writing from Wits University and is a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University. He is also a Fellow of the Academy of the Arts of the World in Cologne, Germany, and has served as a judge on numerous South African writing contests.

With Fred Khumalo's extensive experience in South African literature and his deep understanding of African storytelling traditions, the continent's writers can expect authentic and nuanced evaluation of their submissions. His appointment, alongside this internationally respected panel, reinforces the Commonwealth Short Story Prize's commitment to showcasing the best voices from across the Commonwealth's diverse literary landscape.

PUBLISH'D AFRIKA



PUBLISH WITH US

Get your manuscript polished and published by us...

SERVICES OFFERED

- ✓ Editing and Proofreading
- ✓ Typesetting and Formatting

- ✓ Manuscript Development
- ✓ Ghostwriting

- ✓ Cover Design
- ✓ And all other self-publishing needs...

Contact details
+27 74 643 0618
+27 83 487 4440

CALL NOW

Visit our Website:
publishdafrika.com

RSA Dancer's Star Keeps Rising:

VERVE RESIDENCY for Teresa Phuti Mojela



South Africa's Teresa Phuti Mojela has been announced as the VERVE RESIDENCIES artists, alongside Senegal's Latif Arafan Wa-hab Diedhiou.

VERVE RESIDENCIES is a funded opportunity for artists from the Global

Majority based in the African continent, of any movement background, to share their ongoing research with VERVE dancers. VERVE is the international touring company of NSCD.

These commissions support artists in building a relationship with NSCD

through a week of research and practice sharing, bookended by bespoke support from Alesandra Seutin (VERVE RESIDENCIES Artistic Mentor & Professional Artist) and Matteo Marfoggia (VERVE Artistic Director & Course Leader).

Speaking of the selection process, VERVE Artistic Director and Curriculum Lead Matteo Marfoggia said:

"I am thrilled to launch the very first iteration of the VERVE Residency this year, a programme dedicated to connecting with contemporary artists of the global majority and in particular from the African continent. The response to our call-out was extraordinary: artists from across Africa shared their unique visions, each carrying rich personal stories and artistic perspectives that made the selection process incredibly inspiring and equally challenging. After much consideration, I am delighted to announce that the residencies will be awarded to Latif and Teresa.

Both artists captivated me with the depth and clarity of their vision, and with practices that weave together diverse movement languages rooted in their cultural backgrounds and lived experiences. Their work expands on existing traditions while charting new directions in dance-making, creating layered and innovative approaches to contemporary performance. I know their presence will bring vital new perspectives into the VERVE broadening our dancers' horizons, enriching the residency programme, and expanding our collective understanding of what contemporary dance can be."

Teresa Phuti Mojela

Teresa Phuti Mojela is an internationally acclaimed South African performing artist, choreographer, curator, movement director, and producer. Born in Limpopo Province, raised in Ivory Park, she is renowned for her powerful lead role as Sibyl in *Waiting for the Sibyl* by William Kentridge, winner of the Laurence Olivier Award for Achievement in Opera.

As founding director of Phuti Pedi Productions and co-founder of Skeem Saka Projects, Phuti also mentors young talent and leads community dance initiatives. Her career spans collaborations with acclaimed artists across the globe, including in the UK, USA, India, and Europe.

She has performed in major festivals and venues worldwide and served as Artistic Director of the Basadi Dance Festival and Mothlana Kalana Incubator. She began her artistic journey in 1999, later training in drama and dance at top South African institutions. Her work combines performance, teaching, and social impact, making her a vital force in contemporary African dance.

Latif Arafan Wa-hab Diedhiou

Born on November 27, 1997, Latif Arafan Wa-hab Diedhiou is a young dancer-in-training from Senegal. His passion for dance led him to embark on a professional career in this field at the age of 19. He began his artistic journey by exploring urban dance as his first form of expression, then discovered traditional and contemporary dance, enriching his choreographic language and his career as a performer and interpreter.

In 2021, Latif joined Ecole Des Sables' Jant-Bi II company as a performer and dancer-in-training. This opportunity opened doors to various training courses with renowned choreographers and teachers, including Germaine Acogny, Wesley Ruzibiza, Alesandra Seutin, Judith Sanchez Ruiz, Julie Dossavi, Toyin Songuro, Olivier Tarpaga, and many others.

He continued his training by taking part in several internships and immersive training courses at Ecole Des Sables, while also getting involved in various local and international projects, such as

Air de temps with Alesandra Seutin and Wesley Ruzibiza, Slow danse as part of Chanel Arts et Métiers in Dakar with Dimitri Chamblas, Blast by Emanuela Iacopini with Compagnie Vedanza, El Nave by Joseph Ramaka and Until the beginnings under the artistic direction of Stephanie Thiersch.

As a dancer with Jant-Bi II, Latif has benefited from a talent grant from the EU's AWA programme fund since 2021 for professional training, from which he graduated as a performer and choreographer at Ecole Des Sables.



Coming
SOON...

PUBLISH'D AFRIKA MAGAZINE

+27 84 311 8838/ +27 83 487 4440

It is said that too many cooks spoil the broth. This broth, comprising of 18 writers unearthed through PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Online Literary Magazine's Short Story Competition, seeks to shatter this myth. *Spoiling The Broth* Vol.1 is a multi-themed collection of new short stories by authors from across the African continent.

National Arts Council **NAC**
an Agency of the Department of Sport, Arts & Culture

Department of Sport, Arts and Culture
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

PRESIDENTIAL EMPLOYMENT STIMULUS

PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Short Story Competition:

And The Winners Are...



This month's leg of the PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Magazine Short Story competition was guest-judged by Goodenough Mashego, an author of eight books across genres such as poetry, essays, long fiction, faction and short stories.

Goodenough is also the editor of numerous books and a sought-after commentator on cultural and political issues. He is a historian currently working on a book about the history of political resistance in Bushbuckridge.

Of the stories, our guest judge said, "Thanks for entrusting me with these beautiful short stories. They are wonderful and well-written, tackling societal issues in a disarming manner."



Publisher's Choice Award

Our guest judge, Gakwi Mashego, went through all the stories that qualified for the last leg of the PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Magazine Short Story Competition. After careful consideration, his winning entry on this batch is a short story titled *The City She Wore*, by Pule S Mokgadinyane.

"The story is beautiful, showing the wealth of experience on the subject matter (photography) the writer brings into the story," he said. "The plot is unpredictable, well-woven and with enough twists to maintain suspense. Great writing."



A freelance writer, *Pule S Mokgadinyane* has published articles such as *How To Be A Digitally Savvy Writer In This Digital World* and *How to Improve Your Writing in Three Easy Steps*. He also blogs on **TheWritingDoyen** and **PuleSpeaks** and has contributed to Medium.com. Pule has completed a manuscript titled *Casualties of Incarceration*, further

showcasing his dedication to exploring social themes through his writing.

He is a proud alumnus of SA Writers College. He also holds a National Diploma in Public Relations Management from UNISA.

Born and raised in Katlehong, Ekurhuleni, Gauteng, South Africa, Pule is deeply committed to African Thought Leadership and actively champions youth development. As a dedicated father to two daughters and a son, he finds joy in sharing his voice online. Whether through thought-provoking tweets at @mokgadinyane_s or socio-political reflections on his blogs.

People's Choice Award

The People's Choice Award went to Khensani Sayiya (25). Khensani is an accomplished author and avid reader hailing from Gobhoza, a village in Mbombela. She began her writing journey during her adolescence, a time marked by struggles with low self-esteem and experiences of bullying, which she attributes, in part, to her mother's abandonment during her childhood.

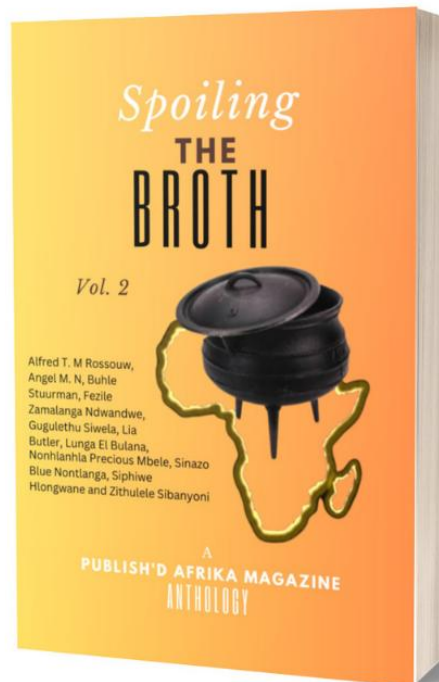


In 2023, she joined a fellowship program with FunDza Literacy Trust, where she further developed her writing abilities. The following year, she released her inaugural book, titled *I Saw It With My Naked Eye*, a poetry collection published by PUBLISH'D AFRIKA. The collection delves into her personal challenges and her quest for self-improvement.

Additionally, her short story, *The Taste of Mango*, was included in the anthology

One Life published by Short.Sharp.Stories, following her recognition as a shortlisted finalist in their competition. Most recently, she has been featured in the poetry collection *Imbiliso*, edited by F.A Mgwenya.

Khensani is a firm believer in the power of words, recognising that South Africans have a penchant for gossip; thus, she aims to educate and heal through the very narratives they cherish.



R200
R60 - Courier Costs



Pre-order
NOW...

PUBLISH'D AFRIKA MAGAZINE

 +27 84 311 8838/ +27 83 487 4440

It is said that too many cooks spoil the broth. This broth, comprising of 18 writers unearthed through PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Online Literary Magazine's Short Story Competition, seeks to shatter this myth. *Spoiling The Broth Vol. 2* is a multi-themed collection of new short stories by authors from across the African continent.

National Arts Council NAC
an Agency of the Department of Sport, Arts & Culture



PRESIDENTIAL
EMPLOYMENT
STIMULUS

How To Pen A Winning Short Story

The PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Magazine Short Story Competition drew to a close in September, and will return again in January 2026.

But what made the stories of all the Publisher's Choice Winners stand out? Below are nine short story elements that might help you pen your best masterpiece not only for the PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Magazine Short Story Competition, but for other short fiction calls for submissions out there.

When you're new to short story writing, you can be tempted to think of fitting everything you need in a story. Writers struggle with this all the time. You might want to develop deep character backgrounds with a huge cast of characters, amazing settings, and at least two subplots. And that's great. But that wouldn't be writing a short story. You might try to cut some of these things, and then all of a sudden you don't have a character arc or a climax or an ending.

Every story has basic elements; a short story's basic elements are just more focused than a novel's. But all those elements must be there, and yes, they need to fit into a short word count. A story, no matter the length, can be boiled down to a character wanting something, having a hard time getting it, and finally either getting it or not. That's it.

Stories are actually simple when you look at the basics. This is why writing short stories will make you a better writer. Short stories force a writer to practice nailing structure and pace. If you nail

those things, you'll be able to write stories of any length.

When it comes down to the elements of a short story, focus on the following key elements that determine if the short story is a complete story or a half-baked one.

1. Character

Characters in books are well-drawn. There's a lot of time spent on character development and backstory. That's not needed for short stories. Short stories need one central character and one or two other major characters. That's about it. There isn't enough room to have a ton of characters and a story will veer away from the central plotline if a large cast is present.

The reader doesn't need to know everything about this character. They don't even need to know their physical appearance if it's not vital to the story. Your character traits in short stories can be so minimal, they don't even need a name.

This doesn't mean the protagonist is a static character who is basically a zombie on a couch. They still have to be a dynamic character, one that changes throughout the story. When you're thinking of character creation for short stories, you don't need to dive into too much detail. Two to three character details are normally enough.

2. Want/Goal

The central character needs to want something—even if it's a glass of water, as Kurt Vonnegut famously said. (They

can also not want something. But they have to have an opinion either way.) The story is their quest to get said something.

Obviously, in real life people want multiple things, often at once and often in contrast to each other. But in a short story, the goal needs to be focused and relatively simple. This want/goal is important to the story plot. This is what drives the character's decisions as they move throughout the space of your story.

3. Conflict

Obstacles and complications need to make the protagonist's journey hard, and these types of conflict should raise the stakes as the protagonist tries to achieve their want/goal. In books, multiple things need to get in the way of the character completing the goal, but in short stories, there can be as little as one central conflict.

Conflict stems from the antagonist, whether that's an external baddie (character conflicts with each other), an internal issue, forces of nature, or society being against them.

4. Decisions

If characters sit around watching the world go by, there's no story plot. A character needs to make decisions at every turn to drive the story forward. Your want/goal is the reason behind these decisions, but the conflict is what's driving the need to even make them.

Say that character was lost in the desert (conflict). They'd do anything to get a glass of water, wouldn't they? That glass of water is the primary source of them living right at that moment, and everything revolves around that. They're not going to make a move without it being in service of that ultimate goal.

In short stories, the protagonist's main goal is the driving force behind their decisions for the few thousand words we spend with them.

5. Climax

This is the element of most stories that's missing when someone tells a boring story at a party. This is the exciting part, the punchline, the ultimate point of the entire story. This is where the character goes up against the baddie in a final showdown and either wins or loses.

6. Ending

The ending is short, often only a couple of sentences in a short story. This is where everything is wrapped up. It follows the climactic fight and winds down the remaining character and plot points, letting readers breathe and showing them what comes next for the character.

Ambiguous endings are fine, but the writer must give a glimpse of what happens to the main character.

7. Change

When you encounter conflict in real life, you make decisions, which lead to change. It's the same for the characters. They change throughout this little adventure they're on, and so do their circumstances. If they're in the same place at the end of the story they were at the beginning, did anything even happen?

8. Point of view (POV)

Choose one point of view and stick to it. This is essential in a short story. You do not have enough room to go head-hopping or switching points of view with each paragraph. You want your reader to be with your character the whole time, otherwise they will lose interest.

9. Setting

Even short stories should have a decently drawn setting. This is tricky because, again, you don't have room to be describing every little thing. You'll need to weave in the setting as you tell the story and stick to the essentials.

It's fine to let a story writing get loose and to play with language. Innovation is experimentation. But when a writer does this, it's often not truly a short story, or a story at all. It might be profound. It might be quote-worthy.

But it also might not be a story.

A short story is not:

Short stories are not poems. Poetry doesn't have the burden of having to tell a story (though it can). Short stories are

stories with story structure. You can write them with poetic language, but there must be a story in there.

Short stories are not plotless. Stream of consciousness is a great way to write morning pages, to get in the mood to write, to journal, etc. It's not a great way to write a short story. Again, short stories are stories. They have to have a plot. Stick with one major event that's happening to one main character.

Practice

Revisit a short story you've written. Take fifteen minutes to analyse the story.

Look for each of these nine elements. Choose one missing element and add it. If one isn't missing, then choose one element to beef up.




R270

R60 – Courier Costs



Pre-order

NOW...

SANELISIWE NDLOVU

 +27 82 235 4872

Trapped in a web of deceit and abuse, a young woman's desperate fight for survival and to preserve her marriage becomes a powerful testament to her unbreakable spirit. 'Covered In Scars' is a heart-wrenching tale of love, betrayal, broken promises and painful discoveries that will leave you breathless.



PUBLISH'D
AFRIKA
ADOPT-AN-AUTHOR PROGRAM



National Arts Council
an Agency of the Department of Sport, Arts & Culture



sport, arts & culture
Department of Sport, Arts and Culture
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



PRESIDENTIAL
EMPLOYMENT
STIMULUS

Asian Literary Festival Set For Africa



The Asian Literary Festival, an international literary event that promotes Asian literature, culture, and intellectual discourse globally, is set to debut in Africa in 2026.

Nairobi City has been chosen as the first location in Africa to host a satellite event of the main festival which is domiciled in Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates. The director of the Nairobi chapter will be Kenyan author and critic, Alexander Nderitu, who has been granted a five-year license to operate the festival in what he

describes as “the New York City of East Africa.” He plans to use the ALF as an international platform for African writers and to raise the cultural prestige of Nairobi City.

In a LinkedIn post following his appointment to run the franchise in Kenya, Nderitu said:

“In 2014, I published a paper titled ‘Changing Kenya’s Literary Landscape’ in which I argued that Nairobi was ripe for recognition as a UNESCO City of Literature, and this honour is further evidence of that. Post-COVID-19 lockdowns, there are now more literary festivals, book fairs, book clubs, and booksellers in Nairobi than ever before...”

Nderitu said the inaugural Nairobi festival is scheduled for April 2026. They invite people from all over the world to come and celebrate literature and the arts.

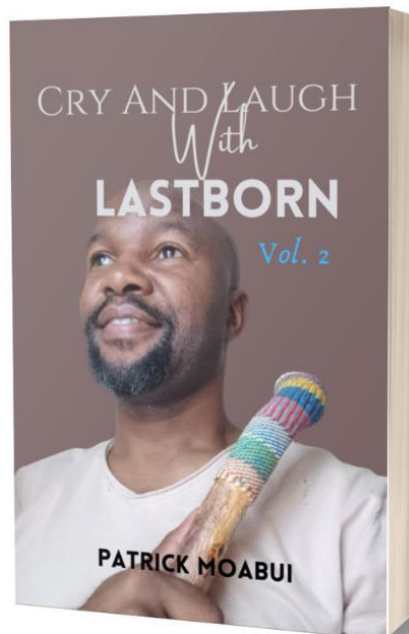
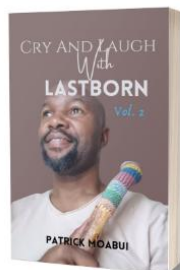
It’ll also be an awesome opportunity for visitors to experience the many delights that Kenya has to offer, from wildlife safaris to sandy beaches to international trade conferences to cultural and historical sites.

“We’re expecting no less than a hundred local and international authors to be present; some famous, some unknown but brilliant,” he said. “There will be book launches, panel discussions, lectures, poetry and music, performances, great food, theatre, art installations, children’s activities, prize-giving, and more. It’s going to be like one big, fat, multicultural wedding!”

The ALF global “caravan of festivals” will begin in Brussels, Belgium. Between 3rd and 5th October 2025, the family-friendly cultural extravaganza will feature over 30 events; showcasing authors from Asia, Africa, South America, and Europe under the theme “Between Worlds—Reviving the Silk Route of Creative Expression”. The next stop will be Gampaha, Sri Lanka. Other confirmed host cities are Montreal, Valencia, Kochi, Dubai, and Abu Dhabi.

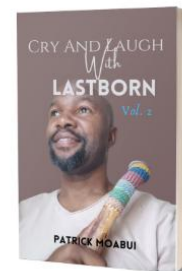
One of Africa's most prolific writers, Alexander Nderitu entered the literary

scene in 2001 when he e-published his first novel, *When the Whirlwind Passes*. He has since authored fourteen books across genres. In 2014, his narrative poem, *Someone in Africa Loves You*, represented Kenyan literature on Commonwealth Poetry Postcards. Some of his work has since been translated into Arabic, Japanese, Chinese, Kiswahili, French, Swedish, Dholuo, Gikūyū, and Czech. He holds the record for the most books published by a single African author in one year.



R250

R70 – Courier Costs



Pre-order

NOW...

PATRICK MOABUI

 +27 82 868 3630

Cry and Laugh with Lastborn is a melting pot of melancholy, love, ecstasy, grief, loss, betrayal, tragedy and elation with an infusion of somewhat hilarious innuendos that are perfectly timed to lighten the load. The poems speak of life just as they speak into life, mirroring what we go through in this grueling journey called life. While some spoken words lament the status quo, Cry and Laugh with Lastborn is a breath of fresh air as it also conjures possible solutions with a dash of humour to help the reader gobble down the bitter truth.



PRESIDENTIAL
EMPLOYMENT
STIMULUS

From Diamonds To Drama

Our Stories Are Currency

By Donald Molosi



Twelve billion dollars. That is the pledge from Qatar's Al Mansour Holdings to boost Botswana's flagging economy through roads, power systems, and mining infrastructure. Yet if we build outward without reflection, our transformation remains incomplete. Let me explain.

Our Stories Are Currency:

Botswana's beauty and political grace are obvious. In global cinema, however, our voice remains muted. Fortunately, that is changing. Over the past decade, our film industry has grown despite minimal investment.

In 2016, I created *We Are All Blue*, a DStv documentary for our 50th independence anniversary that stands as a critical archival testament to who Botswana was and is. It starred Sir Ketumile Masire,

Kgosi Tawana Moremi, and Dr. Sethunya Mosime. That same year, Tumi Sejoe's debut, *The Awakened Spirit*, premiered at Cannes' Short Film Corner, showcasing Tswana spiritualities to the world.

Meanwhile, *A United Kingdom* (2016) introduced Botswana's story to the world in a cinematic spotlight starring Rosamund Pike, Terry Pheto and myself. We opened the London Film Festival and earned widespread acclaim. If that film helped the world understand who

Batswana are, we now need an equally powerful legacy film for 2026, our 60th anniversary.

Fast-forward to 2023. *Partly Cloudy & Hot*, starring supermodel Kaone Kario, earned her the Best Actress Award at the Botswana International Film Festival

and the film became Oscar-qualified in the U.S. The same year, the comedy *Zombie Date Night in Tlokweng*, starring William Last KRM and directed by Moreetsi Gabang, won the NEFTI Africa Best Film Award, exporting our humour globally through Botswana's biggest TikTok comedy star.

In 2024, *Cell 10*, starring Boikhutso Molefhi, boldly tackles Botswana's ongoing debate about the death penalty, demanding a national dialogue on this critical issue.

Looking ahead, *MOITOBO* (2026), an experimental film by CattlePost Films featuring Molibi Maphanyane and Jolanda Steiner, promises to demystify diaspora Botswana to their host nations and reveal our shared humanity, an especially timely message amid rising anti-immigrant sentiment in the West.

Milestones Must Be Witnessed/Preserved On Film

Anniversaries are not just dates. They are living markers of history. Without storytelling, they fade.

We Are All Blue captured Botswana's spirit at 50. We must ensure that as we approach our 60th, a film made by us, about us will preserve this moment for future generations. Perhaps multiple films, since all we have to show for the 50th is that one un-funded documentary.

Film is infrastructure. It strengthens economies, builds identity, and archives memory.

As AfCFTA opens new economic pathways, Botswana's stories told through films such as *We Are All Blue*, *The Awakened Spirit*, *A United Kingdom*, *Partly Cloudy & Hot*, *Zombie Date Night in Tlokweng*, *Cell 10*, and *MOITOBO* can be

the soul of our narrative, shared regionally across Southern Africa.

The Late Dr. Lydia Nyati-Ramahobo, a distinguished Yeyi scholar on language policy and cultural rights, emphasises that "self-worth and confidence derive from the sentiment that one's language is important and that one can participate meaningfully in the development of one's language." Her insight highlights why supporting Botswana's cinematic voice is not just cultural: it is foundational to national identity.

Humble Proposal: Investing In Memory

If even 0.1% of the \$12 billion investment (about \$12 million) were funneled into a Botswana Film Fund, we as Botswana filmmakers could:

1. Launch a Botswana Creative Industries Incubator supporting filmmakers, documentarians, and storytellers
2. Produce a nationally reflective documentary like *We Are All Blue*, this time led by a new generation of filmmakers
3. Build local production infrastructure and support festival-ready films.

To the Botswana Development Corporation, the Ministry of Culture, and our global partners:

As you build roads and power grids, don't forget to build our legacy. Our essence exists not in blueprints but in the stories we tell, in Setswana and our other tongues, forever.

***Donald Molosi** is Executive Producer at CattlePost Films, which is based in London and Gaborone. He is also the author of *Dear Upright African*.

Another Feather In The Cap For Thuso Mbedu



Source: Thuso Mbedu via Instagram

Task, an American crime series led by Mark Ruffalo and co-starring South Africa's Thuso Mbedu, has been dubbed one of 2025's Best Series following its premiere on September 7th, garnering critical acclaim.

The series has attracted a positive reception with viewers and Crocs on Rotten Tomatoes with 90% score from 48 reviews. The consensus being "Task, is a culturally-specific crime story that's unrelentingly bleak but equally riveting."

Thuso plays Sergeant Aleah Clinton who is part of the task force led by Ruffalo's character. This puts a feather on Mbedu's career cap because it solidifies her star power, with her résumé now boasting back-to-back critically lauded projects. The HBO original series is airing in South Africa on Showmax.

Thuso Nokwanda Mbedu is a South African actress born on 8 July 1991, in Pietermaritzburg, Kwazulu-Natal. She rose to prominence for her performance in the South African teen drama series *Is'Thunzi* for which she was nominated

consecutively for an International Emmy in 2017 and 2018. Mbedu later appeared on the 2018 Forbes Africa 30 under 30 list.

In 2021, she starred in the Amazon Video limited series *The Underground Railroad* as Cora, which made her the first South

African actress to lead an American television series, and earned her the Independent Spirit Award for Best Female Performance in a New Scripted Series. She then made her feature film debut in the American historical epic *The Woman King* (2022) in the role of Nawiri.



Pre-order

NOW...

PUBLISH'D AFRIKA

+27 74 643 0618

It is said that too many cooks spoil the broth. This broth, comprising of 15 writers unearthed through PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Online Literary Magazine's Short Story Competition, seeks to shatter this myth. *Spoiling The Broth Vol. 3* is a multi-themed collection of new short stories by authors from across the African continent. They were all monthly winners in tightly contested short story writing competitions that were held from January to October 2023.



PRESIDENTIAL
EMPLOYMENT
STIMULUS

Funda Mpondo Festival Triumphs, Fostering Heritage and New Voices



The 4th Annual Funda Mpondo International Literary Festival has been hailed as a resounding success, drawing over 400 attendees from across the region.

Held from 2 to 4 September 2025, the festival marked a significant increase in participation from previous years. Broadcast live on Inkonjane FM and Sajonisi Youth Radio 88.5, the event provided a vibrant platform for celebrating the isiMpondo language, heritage, and intergenerational storytelling.

Spanning three days across Port St Johns and Lusikisiki, the festival was a dynamic showcase of literary and cultural exchange, featuring distinguished

guests, artists, and partners. The festival's program was expertly guided by three facilitators: Siphokazi Gambushe, Sinegugu Zukulu, and Dr. Gcina Mhlophe, who facilitated the events from the opening dinner through Day 2 and Day 3.

The festival commenced with the rendition of the National Anthem by Jamakazi Bazana and followed by a powerful message from Festival Director

Nomawele Njongo, who delivered a compelling call to action: "This is a call to action—to amplify our voices and tell our stories. They are the bridges between

the wisdom of our elders and the dreams of our children. And we believe: a good reader is a good leader.”

The official Welcoming Dinner at Pholela Lodge also featured addresses by Mayor Cebisa Mazuza (Port St Johns), Ingquza Hill Local Municipality Mayor Nonkosi Pepping, and MEC for Arts and Culture, Sibulele Ngongo. MEC Ngongo presented most of her speech in isiMpondo, emphasizing the importance of speaking in our indigenous languages and stressing that initiatives like the Funda Mpondo Literary Festival must be fully supported by the Arts and Culture Council in the Eastern Cape.

The second day opened with a stirring rendition of the National Anthem by Jamakazi Bazana. Nomawele set the tone for a day dedicated to dialogue and reflection. Key addresses were delivered by: Traditional Leader, Nkosi Mkwedini, National Heritage Council representative, Matanali Monde Nkasawe, CEO of the Eastern Cape Provincial Arts and Culture Council.

A key highlight was the intergenerational dialogue, a two-hour session moderated by Monde Nkasawe. The panel brought together an elder, Dr. Gcina Mhlophe; a middle-generation representative, Chantal Willie-Petersen (Wits); and a young voice, Lethu Nkwanyana, fostering conversations across generations about heritage, storytelling, and cultural preservation.

Other notable panels included: Global Narrative Bridges: Intergenerational Perspective featured Prof. Faith Ben-Daniels from Ghana and Dr. Gcina Mhlophe, moderated by Rita Ndonibi from Ghana. Music Education as the Living Archive of Past Wisdom, Present Voices, and Future Echoes featured Dr.

Phuti Sepuru from UNISA and Chantal Willie-Petersen, moderated by Pumlile Nyobole from Clarkebury Agricultural School.

The third day began with a keynote address by Dr. Xolisa Tshongolo from the Pan South African Language Board, who spoke on the Orthography guidelines for isiXhosa and the future of isiMpondo. This was followed by the IsiMpondo Language Reading: Indigenous Language Preservation, featuring Nobesuthu Moni and Nzaliseko Manqina.

The day was marked by the historic launches of the Funda Mpondo International Literary Festival Magazine and the IsiMpondo Language Board. The board was appointed by Nomawele Njongo, the visionary founder of KwaziThina Publishers and the festival, and is expected to hold its first meeting in November 2025.

A standout panel, From Page to Screen: How Publishers Can Collaborate with Filmmakers to Amplify African Stories, featured television content producer Unathi Memela and Christian Zas from Congo. Festival Director Nomawele Njongo moderated the discussion alongside Prince Khumbulani Hlongwane, highlighting practical strategies for bringing African narratives to wider audiences.

A special Play Your Part Corner session was opened by Nomawele Njongo, a Brand South Africa Play Your Part Ambassador. Featuring Lwandile Gcume and Luvuyo Nongimba, the session inspired nation-building, active citizenship, and social cohesion, powered by Brand South Africa. The festival also featured a Children's Corner, which was

facilitated by Nolie Vimba from Vellem Primary School.

The day also featured powerful poem performances by an acclaimed roster of poets, including international, multi-award-winning poet Lethu Nkwanyana (KwaDukuza), along with Oyigiyonke Fono, Phila Matandabuzo, Ayabonga Ndungane, Madikane Phawu, and Sandiso Sinaze, a board member of the Poem, Comedy, and Storytelling Council of South Africa.

The festival's commitment to community empowerment was recognised when Clarkebury Agricultural School won the Provincial HESOp Competition. This award acknowledges the festival's role in creating youth job opportunities, empowering women, and promoting isiMpondo as a potential 13th official language. The school will now represent the Eastern Cape at the national finals. A week after the festival's conclusion, its impact was highlighted by the Eastern Cape MEC of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture, Hon. Sibulele Ngongo, during her speech at the National Council of Provinces, one of the two houses of the Parliament of South Africa.



The festival was attended by a number of other notable people, including: Masibona Njongo (Festival Director's Mom), Princess Stella Sigcau, the South African Consulate General in Hong Kong, Chief Nandi Bushula, Prince Mbulelo Sigcau, Nomaitaly Njungwuni (Lusikisiki Standard Bank Manager), Themba Tabata (Port St Johns Standard Bank Branch Manager), Dr. Hlongwane, Somikazi Bonani (Ethekewini Libraries), Tembakazi (Port St Johns Standard Bank Manager), Seven Oaks Superspar Senior Manager, Fura, Magwa Tea CEO, Makatu Ramabulana, Partners and Exhibitors.

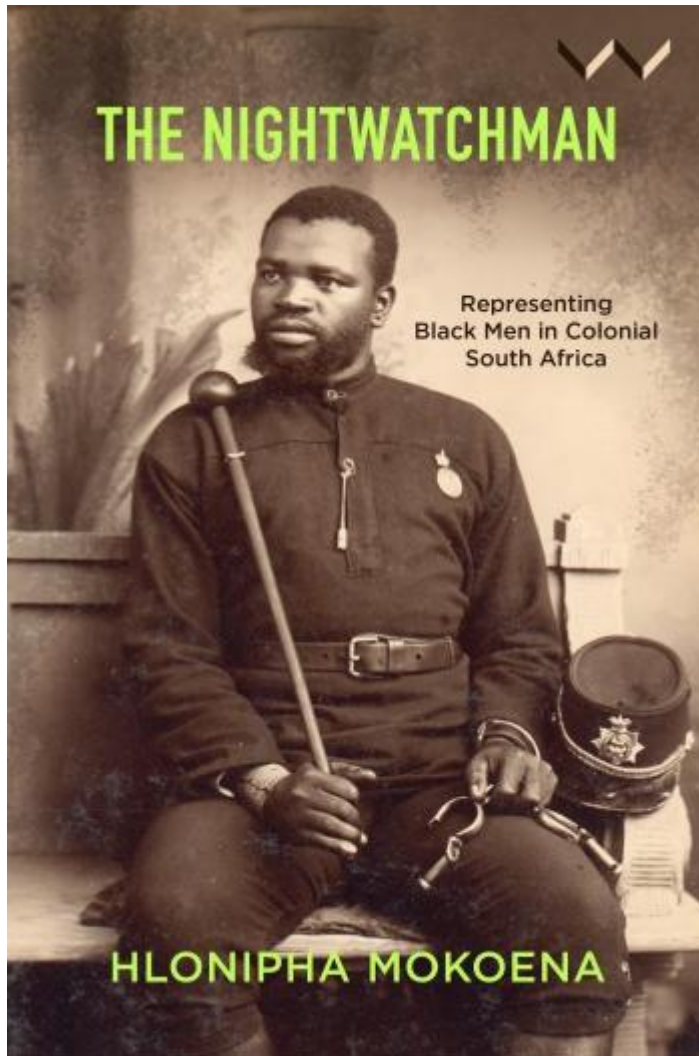
The festival's success was made possible through the support of its partners, including: National Heritage Council, Brand South Africa Play Your Part, Eastern Cape Provincial Arts and Culture Council, OR Tambo District Municipality, Ingquza Hill Local Municipality, Port St Johns Local Municipality, Standard Bank, SANRAL, Seven Oaks Superspar, and Boxer.

"We thank all our media partners: Eastern Cape Voice, Coastal Herald and Publish'd Afrika Magazine, Izwi Lase Afrika, Pondoland Times, Herald Coastal, Lusikisiki Iindaba, Sajonisi Youth Radio and Inkonzane FM and media Houses who featured us and made sure that the festival is known."

The Funda Mpondo International Literary Festival continues to reaffirm its position as a cultural beacon, fostering literacy, preserving heritage, and inspiring a new generation of readers and writers.

The Nightwatchman

Representing Black Men in Colonial South Africa



Drawing on a rich archive of colonial photography, author Hlonipha Mokoena explores how images of African policemen and nightwatchmen in colonial South Africa challenged traditional narratives of oppression, revealing how uniform and portraiture transformed the black male figure into an aesthetic subject worthy of admiration.

This illustrated collection of essays brings into focus African men in colonial uniforms as a subject of portraiture. It extends the literature on colonial ethnographic photography by creating a narrative of nightwatchman portraiture from the rich archive of images. While a genre of photography developed around images of the 'Zulu warrior' after the defeat of the English at Isandlwana, Hlonipha Mokoena argues that the spectacle of the Zulu male body was inaugurated after the last Zulu king, Cetshwayo, was

photographed as a posing subject.

Much research has focussed on the African man as a functionary of settler power; these essays shift debates about how the body moves in history. Placed in uniform, the male subject becomes aestheticised and admired. Mokoena focuses on the sartorial selection processes and co-optation of colonial aesthetic culture that constructed the idea of the Nonqgqayi or nightwatchman as a fully formed photographic presence. The beauty captured in these images upends conceptions of colonial photography as a tool of oppression.

In its focus on the figure of the black and brown fighting man, *The Nightwatchman* offers an innovative work on the history of portraiture in colonial South Africa and new avenues for the interpretation of visual representations of the black male figure.

“An author carries a book and a pen so that when you get inspired, you write it down.”



This is the advice Gothata Gopolang received from colleague and fellow author, Gaolatlhe Wame Setsile-Srinath. At the time, Gothata was still working on her now published book, *Roses Will Bloom Again*, a transformative devotional journal which aims to help people navigate different seasons of life.

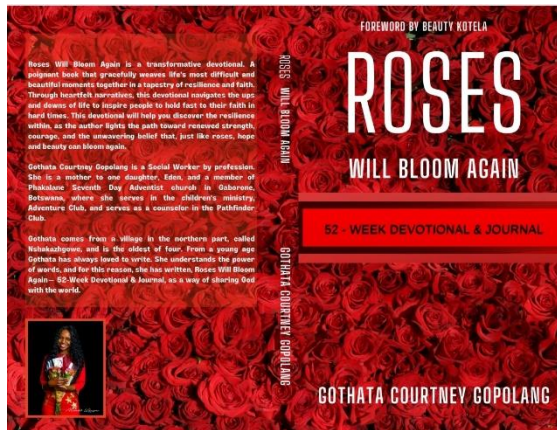
As it turned out, Setsile-Srinath's advice didn't only resonate with her, it was pivotal in finalising her book project.

“My challenges were many, but with God nothing is impossible,” she said. “He sent me destiny helpers who have been significant in birthing this book.”

Gothata is a devout Christian Phakalane, Gaborone in Botswana. She hails from a close-knit family of four, a mother to one daughter, a writer, a Social Worker passionate about child and family social work. She is also a certified EMDR Trauma therapist who specialises in all the different type of traumas. Her interests involve photography, writing, traveling and teaching children.

“*Roses Will Bloom Again* is a book that will inspire, motivate and give people hope in dealing with life's challenges,” she said. “It gives practical and real life testimonies of how people can overcome their trials but still hold on to God despite the

challenges of life. It clearly outlines how resilience can be achieved through one's unwavering faith in God through prayer and support from family and friends.”



Since her childhood, Gothata has always looked up to the sky, talking to God about her dreams and what she envisioned her future to be like. It included having a loving family, children, knowing God and serving Him.

“As long as I can remember, I always carried a book and a pen,” she said. “I love writing so much that whenever I was in a meeting and minutes needed to be written, I volunteered. Moreover, I offered to help with any assignments that needed writing. I have a box full of journals which I have kept since my university days, which have notes of sermons and inspirational quotes. I intend to leave them for my daughter as a legacy; they contain wisdom and knowledge in that is so profound.”

Gothata also loves reading and has an expansive library consisting of devotionals, biographies and self-help

books. Devotional books, she says, inspired her and brought her closer to God, and that was when she realised that the best legacy one can have is to write a book.

“A book gives a glimpse of who you are to people, and it will remain for generations to come,” she said. “It can help one travel to places they have never been and experience things they have not been a part of.”

Gothata she is kept steady by Gods’ love and that His grace and mercy are evident in her life; the way He forgives her over and over again, answered prayers and the grace to face trials and challenges in her life. Her faith is further improved in love poured into her life through my family and friends.

“In life, even as Christians, our faith can be tested, leading it to waiver,” she says. “It is important to know “God will work it out”. One thing I know, my God will work it out. Put God at the helm of your life always, regardless of what season of life you are in. Although the storm may rage, hold on to Him. You may have had a bad page or chapter, but that is not your entire book. Allow Him to turn the page, and like a rose that is withered, you will bloom again.”



Publishing, Manufacturing and Distribution Cluster Launched

Thekgang NPC, mandated by the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC), has announced the launch of the Book Publishing, Manufacturing and Distribution Cluster, one of the 17 Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) clusters established to strengthen and transform South Africa's creative economy.

The establishment of the Book Publishing, Manufacturing and Distribution Cluster marks a critical step in uplifting and advancing the interests of stakeholders across the book value chain. Guided by DSAC's mandate, the Cluster seeks to ensure that literature reflects the diversity of South Africa's voices, while creating new opportunities for authors, illustrators, publishers, and distributors. At its core, the initiative is about making books more accessible to all communities, especially those that have historically been excluded from the publishing space.

The Book Publishing, Manufacturing and Distribution Cluster is constituted as Thekgang NPC, a non-profit organisation committed to promoting inclusivity and transformation in the sector. Among its objectives are to support South African authors, illustrators, and publishers by expanding access to book manufacturing and distribution; to facilitate resources and capacity-building programmes; to organise workshops, events and promotional activities that showcase local literature; and to collaborate with partners to open new pathways for

sustainable work opportunities in the book value chain.

The Cluster is led by a Board of Directors comprising Founder and Board Chair Terry-Ann Adams, co-founder and Treasurer Lorraine Sithole, and co-founder and Company Secretary Melvin Kaabwe, who also serves as spokesperson.

"Thekgang NPC is honoured to lead this vital sectoral cluster on behalf of DSAC," said Kaabwe. "We believe that books are a cornerstone of cultural expression and nation-building. Through this initiative, we aim to empower authors, strengthen indigenous language publishing, and create new pathways for literature to reach marginalised communities."

The work of the organisation is underpinned by four key areas of intervention: building the capacity of authors to publish high-quality works, particularly in indigenous languages; transforming the consumption and appreciation of local stories; supporting emerging and established talent to share their work with wider audiences; and expanding markets through innovative distribution channels.

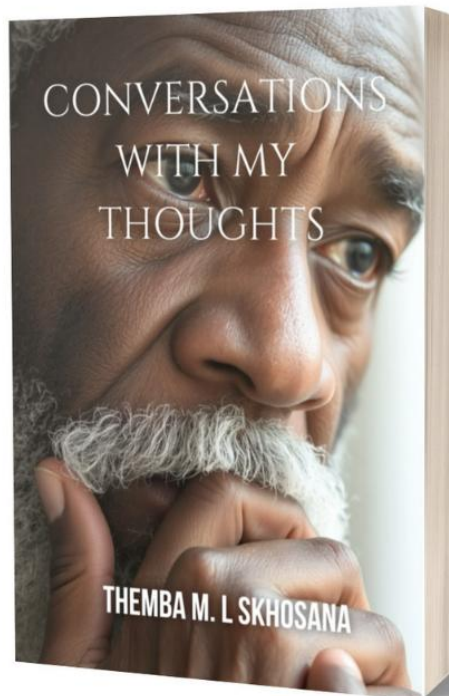
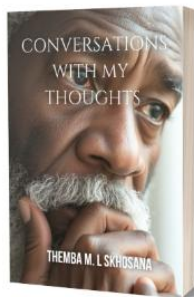
Already, the Book Publishing, Manufacturing and Distribution Cluster has begun rolling out projects that reflect this vision. These include an upcoming book value chain imbizo in Kwa-Dukuza, Stanger and a collaboration with the Jacana Literary Foundation to deliver a Work Skills Programme to publishing postgraduate students to

research best practices for publishing poetry anthologies in indigenous languages.

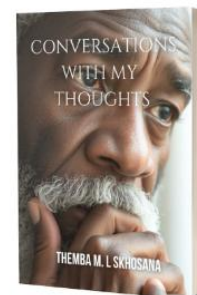
Thekgang will also be launching an industry podcast, Thekgang Talking, which features interviews from various actors in the sector. Upcoming activations include an Author Branding and Marketing workshop for authors in the North West and the distribution of indigenous language books at schools in Limpopo and Mpumalanga.

Thekgang NPC exists to foster a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable book sector that benefits South Africa's broader creative industries. Under the mandate of DSAC's Cultural and Creative Industries programme, the organisation is committed to advancing the vision of a transformed and accessible publishing landscape.

For more information, visit www.thekgang.org.za



R180
R60 – Courier Costs



Pre-order

NOW...

THEMBA SKHOSANA



+27 72 271 0312

'Conversations With My Thoughts' is an invitation on a journey to the corners of your mind that you have long abandoned, where the cobwebs have formed and taken permanent residence. As you take a walk through those avenues you may have considered taboo to explore, please fear not, as only you control how deep the mind delves. Steadily stroll through familiar, cognitive streets that you have often neglected to explore. Understand and admire their beauty in their unique forms.



National Arts Council NAC
an Agency of the Department of Sport, Arts & Culture



**PRESIDENTIAL
EMPLOYMENT
STIMULUS**

CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

Submissions Open for the \$1000 Sillerman First Book Prize for African Poets

The African Poetry Book Fund has opened its annual submissions window for the Sillerman First Book Prize for African Poetry, offering emerging African poets the opportunity to win USD \$1,000 and book publication through the University of Nebraska Press as part of the African Poetry Book Series.

The prestigious prize is awarded annually to an African poet who has not yet published a collection of poetry. Submissions are now being accepted through December 1st, 2025. A winner will be announced in June.

Eligibility Requirements

The Sillerman First Book Prize for African Poets will only accept “first book” submissions from African writers who have not published a book-length poetry collection. This includes self-published books if they were sold online, in stores, or at readings. Writers who have edited and published an anthology or a similar collection of other writers’ work remain eligible.

An “African writer” is taken to mean someone who was born in Africa, who is a national or resident of an African country, or whose parents are African.

Only poetry submissions in English can be considered. Work translated from another language to English is accepted, but a percentage of the prize will be awarded to the translator.

No past or present paid employees of the University of Nebraska Press, Akashic Books, or Amalion Press, or current faculty, students, or employees at Brown University, are eligible for the prizes.

Submission Guidelines

Submission Period: Manuscripts are accepted annually between September 15th and December 1st.

Entry Fee: No entry fee is required to submit to the contest.

Manuscript Requirements:

Poetry manuscripts should be at least 50 pages long

The author’s name should not appear on the manuscript – all entries will be read anonymously

Please include a cover page listing only the title of the manuscript (not the author's name, address, telephone number, or email address)

An acknowledgements page listing the publication history of individual poems may be included, if desired

No application forms are necessary

Eligible writers may submit more than one manuscript

Formatting Guidelines: While there are no specific formatting rules, manuscripts should preferably be submitted in Times New Roman or Arial, 12-point font, single-spaced. The organisers prefer one poem per page, meaning a new poem does not begin on the same page on which another ends.

How to Submit

The Sillerman First Book Prize for African Poets accepts electronic submissions ONLY. Submit your manuscript via Submittable at: <https://africanpoetrybookfund.submittable.com/submit>

Alexander Nderitu Prize for World Literature Returns

The African Griot Review has announced the return of the Alexander Nderitu Prize for World Literature, inviting writers worldwide to submit original one-act stage plays for its 2025 edition.

Founded and judged by Kenyan-born writer and critic, Alexander Nderitu, the prize will award a single winner Kshs 50,000, a one-year online promotion campaign by Websoft Interactive, and a cover feature in The African Griot Review magazine.

Eligibility & Rules:

Open to writers worldwide aged 18+

There is no entry fee

English only (translations and adaptations not accepted)

Must be original, unpublished and unperformed one-act stage plays (10–15 minutes; approx. 10–15 pages). Standard stage play format is encouraged but not mandatory.

Up to three plays (solo authors only; no collaborations)

Do not include your name in the script file

Plagiarism and AI-generated works will result in instant disqualification

Submission Guidelines:

Submit entries as Adobe PDF to submissions@theafricangriot.com

Subject line: 2025 Alexander Nderitu Prize for World Literature Submission

Email body must include:

Title of play

Full name

Nationality

Age

Telephone number

Email address

Brief bio (max 300 words)

Attach your play as a PDF (without identifiers)

A longlist will be announced in December 2025, followed by a shortlist in February 2026. The winner will be revealed at a special literary event in April 2026.

Writers seeking further information can contact admin@theafricangriot.com

Submissions close November 15, 2025.

<https://jaylit.com/the-alexander-nderitu-prize-for-world-literature-2025-opens-for-submissions>

Africanfuturism Call For Submissions

UK publisher Flame Tree Publishing is now accepting submissions for their upcoming Africanfuturism Short Stories anthology! Black African, African-diaspora, and African-descent writers are invited to submit their short stories for consideration until November 2, 2025.

Flame Tree Publishing is building on the success of their Gothic Fantasy series, including Black Sci-Fi Short Stories, African Ghost Short Stories, and First Peoples Shared Stories. Following their 2025 Afrofuturism Short Stories publication, they are now seeking stories for their companion volume, Africanfuturism Short Stories, scheduled for 2026.

The publisher defines Africanfuturism as stories told from “the African point of view, experience, culture, themes, and history with technology based in Africa.” Unlike Afrofuturism, which often centers the Black experience in the West, Africanfuturism stories should be set in and about Africa, whether that’s a future Africa, an alternative Africa, or a parallel Africa.

Submission Guidelines

Manuscript Format: Submit stories in .docx, .doc, or .rtf format. Stories should ideally be 2000-4000 words, though submissions slightly outside this range will still be considered. The file name must match the story title exactly, using only spaces between words (no underscores or dashes).

Submission Process: Send submissions to african@flametreepublishing.com with the story title as the email subject line. Multiple submissions are allowed but must be sent in separate emails. Only one story per email should be submitted.

Payment: Accepted stories will receive Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers of America (SFWA) rates: 8 cents/6 pence per word for original stories, 6 cents/4 pence per word for reprints.

Selection Process: Each story will be read and assessed by the editorial team within 4 months of the submission deadline. Payment for chosen stories will be made within 30 days of the final publication date. Authors should indicate in their submission email whether the story is previously unpublished or a reprint.

Important Notes: Stories using AI-generated text will not be accepted. Simultaneous submissions are permitted, but authors must retain the right to license their story in an anthology. Recent submissions to other Flame Tree anthologies should be mentioned in the submission email.

IBF Poetry Slam 2025: Submissions Now Open!

Got the words to move a crowd? Here's your chance!

The iLembe Book Festival is calling all poets (16 years and older) to enter the IBF Poetry Slam 2025.

Submit your unpublished poem (1-minute video or 1-page written piece) in any official South African language.

Email entries to hello@ilembebookfestival.co.za by 03 October 2025.

Remember: all participants must attend the workshop and festival in person at the Luthuli Museum

Important dates:

- **Submissions close:** 3 October
- **Selected poets announced:** 17 October
- **Poetry workshop:** 24 October
- **Poetry Slam:** 25 October

Bring your words. Bring your fire. The stage is waiting.

Cover Art Design for Unathi Slasha's Award-Winning Book

Artists are invited to create a cover art design for *The Hollow Sound of Lightweight Bodies* by Unathi Slasha, winner of the 2025 Iskanchi Book Prize. The selected artwork will become the official cover of the book.

About The Book

The Hollow Sound of Lightweight Bodies follows Mxabanisi Bulawayo, a 21-year-old crematorium technician by night and amateur obituarist by day. His life takes an uncanny turn when he encounters Baba Bouka, a mythical guardian of ancient animals and dream creatures. In this darkly playful narrative, Unathi Slasha blends folklore, fantasy, gossip, and grief into an audacious meditation on violence, despondence, and the fragile line between the real and the surreal.

What They Are Looking For

A striking, original cover art design that captures the spirit of the book

All artistic mediums are welcome: illustration, painting, digital art, collage, mixed media. Let your creativity lead.

The winning design will feature on the published edition of the book

Submission Details

Deadline: September 30, 2025

Format: High-resolution JPEG or PNG (minimum 300 dpi)

Size: Standard novel cover dimensions (~6×9 inches), leaving space for title and author text

Include: A short artist statement (100–200 words) about your design

Send to: submissions@iskanchi.com with the subject line: Cover Art Submission – *Lightweight Bodies*

Prize: \$200 cash prize

Credit as the cover artist in the published book and promotional materials

Feature on Iskanchi's platforms and social media

